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The Power of Acceptance

     Being different is definitely not easy, and I can relate. I will always remember being in middle school, and thinking I was different. Being Puerto Rican made me somewhat self-conscious. I felt like I didn’t have a true Puerto Rican identity because I knew practically no Spanish, was only half Puerto Rican, and didn’t look noticeably Hispanic. I didn’t take pride in being Hispanic because I wanted to be either fully Puerto Rican, or not at all. I held a small grudge against my 100% Puerto Rican father for not teaching me the Spanish I now wanted to learn. But then when someone identified me as Hispanic, my whole attitude changed.

     I was in my middle school gym class, and all of a sudden another Hispanic classmate asked me if I was Puerto Rican. I couldn’t believe that someone had finally noticed. It felt so good to identify with another Hispanic student, and some of my worries vanished. I then realized what I should have known all along, which was that I needed to embrace myself for who I was.

     I took my little life lesson, and turned it into a life rule. I wanted to I would from then on try harder at accepting people for their differing thoughts, races, ideals, and practices. Sometimes accepting people can be difficult. That may be because a person is so different from you, that understanding them feels almost impossible, but acceptance is so important. If a person is often misunderstood, he or she may feel alone in the world or that no one can relate to them, although this is not true. There is a whole world of people, and someone is bound to be similar to another person. Acceptance starts with one person sharing something in common with another, and making them feel like they are not too different to fit in. Although there are a lot more important aspects of life besides fitting in, almost everyone wants to identify with another person; it is human instinct.

    Life is short, and with our small amount of time on earth, we should make the most of what we have and what is around us. What we are is something we should try to accept, and the people around us are also worth acceptance. I believe in open-mindedness. I believe in the power of embracing people for who or what they are. When people finally do this, we will change the world. This may sound extreme, but I truly think that all a person needs in life is acceptance. Where this acceptance comes from does not matter. What matters is that people are understood for who they are. If they are a different race from you, fine. If they think differently from you, that is fine too. Once a person feels like they are not alone in the world, their whole outlook can change.